

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /078 W

-----241749Z 023858 /43

P R 241520Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7546

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIRS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L XUAKCHOTT 1213

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MOPS; PFOR, MR

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: POLISARIO ANNIVERSARY PASSES QUIETLY

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 1168

1. FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDING OF POLISARIO APPEARS TO HAVE PASSED WITHOUT INCIDENT. INDEED POLISARIO HAS CBT STRQQK ANYWHERE IN MAURITANIA SINCE MAY 1 ZOUERATE ATTACK. DISPUTE RAMPANT RUMORS OF "ALMOST CERTAIN" ATTACKS/INCIDENTS ON MAY 20 (REFTEL), THERE WAS LITTLE APPARENT INCREASE IN SECURITY IN AND AROUND NOUAKCHOTT EITHER ON EVE OF OR ON ANNIVERSARY. TO CONTRARY, MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT (GIRM) ADOPTED DETERMINED BUSINESS-AS-USUAL STANCE WITH PRESIDENT PRESIDENG OVER CEREMONIAL PUBLIC OPENING OF LABOR CONGRESS AND GIRM MINISTER WELCOMING ASSEMBLED DELEGATES TO PUBLIC RECEPTION THAT EVENING IN WIDE OPEN, DOWNTOWN HOTEL. (CURIOSLY, IN FACE OF FRENCH COMMUNITY NERVOUSNESS, FRENCH CULTURAL

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ATTACHE HOSTED LARGE AFTER PERFORMANCE RECPETION FOR FRENCH AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES TO FETE TRAVELING PARIS PLAY EAST IN TOWN FOR ONE NIGHT STAND).

2. WHILE ONE POLISARIO ANNIVERSARY IS "DOWN", THERE ARE TWO MORE JUST ARUND CORNER: JUNE 8 ATTACK ON NOUAKCHOTT; JUNE 9 BATTLEFIELD DEATH OF POLISARIO FOUNDER AND LEADER AL-WAALI.

FRENCH COMMUNITY CONTINUES UPSET, AND PREDICTIONS OF JUNE VIOLENCE CAN BE COUNTED UPON TO TAKE OVER RUMOR CIRCUIT IN NEXT FEW DAYS. MAURITANIAN MILITARY AND SECURITY AUTHORITIES, HAVING BEEN CAUGHT SNOOZING MAY 1, WILL UNDOUBTEDLY MAKE MAJOR EFFORT TO RETAIN RE-ENERGIZED ALERT STATUS THROUGH END OF JUNE.

CWVEM XCENCH COMMUNITY IS ACUTELY SENSITIVE TO POLISARIO ORAL ATTACKS ON FRENCH PRESENCE IN MAURITANIA, AND AVIDLY FOLLOWS LATEST NEWS REPORTS RE FATE OF ZOUERATE HOSTAGES. REITERATED DECLARATIONS OF SAHARAN REPUBLIC (SDAR) FOREIGN MINISTER THAT MAURITANIA IS "WAR ZONE" AND NEW ASSERTIONS THAT FRENCH HOSTAGES WERE "MERCENARIES" WHO WOULD ONLY BE RELEASED VIA DIRECT SDAR-GIRM NEGOTIATIONS QUICKLY MADE ROUNDS AFTER BEING REPORTED ON MAY 22 FRANCEINTER AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL NEWSCASTS. MAY 20 ISSUE PARIS MATCH, WITH GRAPHIC PHOTOS OF BODIES OF FRENCH COUPE KILLED IN ZOUERATE, SOLD OUT IMMEDIATELY ON NOUAKCHOTT NEWSSTANDS ACCORDING TO ONE STORY CIRCULATING IN NOUAKCHOTT, OF 300 PLUS FRENCH TECHNICIANS WORKING IN ZOUERATE, 157 HAVE ALREADY INDICATED THAT THEY DO NOT RPT NOT INTEND TO RENEW THEIR CONTRACTS. EXECUTIVES OF GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL HOLDING COMPANY ARE KEENLY AWARE OF PROBLEM, ARE DETERMINED TO OBTAIN EXPATRIATE EXPERTISE REQUIRED TO KEEP MINE COMPLETED IN OPERATION, AND RECOGNIZE THEY MAY HAVE TO PAY SHARPLY INCREASED SALARIES TO ATTRACT AND HOLD FOREIGN TECHNICIANS.

HANDYSIDE

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 24-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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